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Paperd March 27th 1826

An.

Inaugural Dissertation

On Dyspepsia;

Submitted to the examination
of the
Medical Faculty
of the
University of Pennsylvania,
for the
Degree of doctor of medicine.

By Thomas J. Squibb
of
Delaware.
1826.

Robert M. M. 27 1850

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

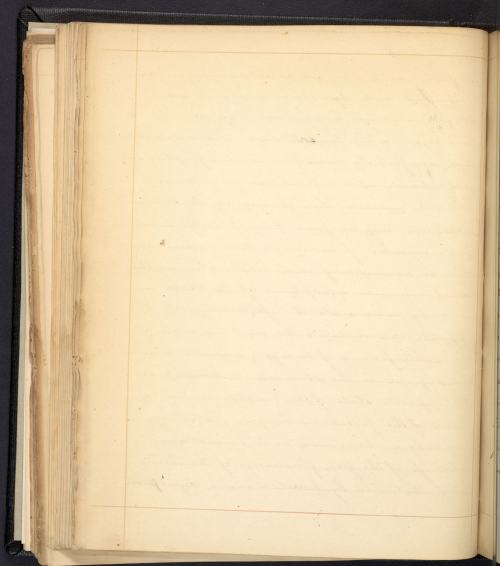
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
1850

On Dyspepsia.

The wonderful power observes a late beautiful writer of the digestive apparatus to assimilate every thing which air, ocean, or earth yields, to the support of man, is a striking proof of the wisdom and beneficence of our creator. But it is erroneous in principle and pernicious in practice, to infer from this, that because we can eat all things, we may therefore, eat all things with impunity. Considering therefore the great variety of articles taken into the stomach, the want of moderation in regulating the quantity of them, and fresh matters perpetually thrown in to be assimilated before the former chyme has passed into the duodenum, together with other causes to be spoken of hereafter, it is not surprising that so delicate an

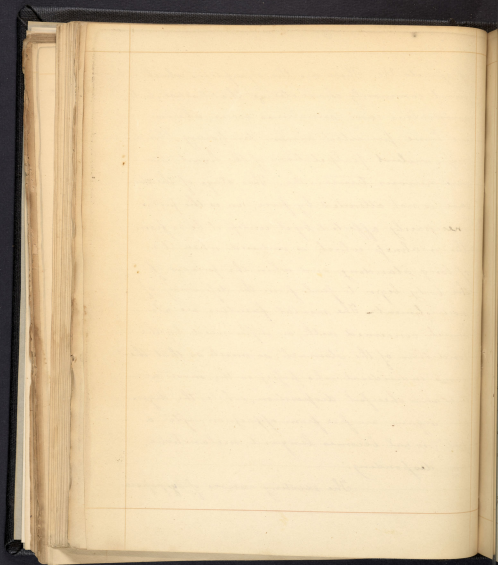
an organ as the stomach should so frequently be affected with ~~dyspepsia~~, or, as it is more popularly called, indigestion. This disease, the subject of the present essay is a complaint that is infinitely diversified in its symptoms, and depends upon a great variety of causes.

It does not run through any regular course or observe any uniform progress; but, consists in a number of morbid actions, which succeed or accompany each other. Among the most common symptoms of the disease we may enumerate the following; loss of appetite or sometimes the contrary state of an acute feeling of hunger, nausea, vomiting, pain in the stomach, costiveness or the opposite state of the bowels, morbid condition of the faecal discharges, flatulency, cardialgia, headache, sour eructations, coldness of the feet, flushings of the cheeks, sleep disturbed by horrid dreams, depression



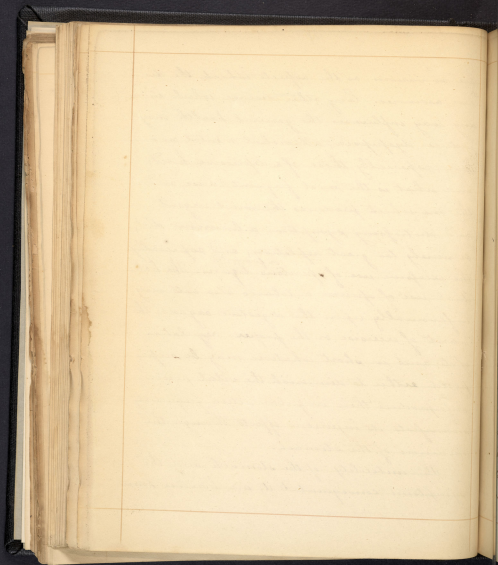
of spirits &c. These are the symptoms which most commonly characterize the disease; but anomalous cases sometimes occur, wherein we have perverted vision, temporary blindness, violent palpitations of the heart, severe nervous tremors &c. This stage of the disease is not attended by fever, nor is the pulse necessarily affected by it, unless it be so from the weakness which is induced when it is of long standing, and when the powers of the body begin to fail from the deficiency of nourishment. The mental faculties are also much concerned with, or influenced by the condition of the stomach; so much so that the same individual who possesses the most active and cheerful disposition, while the digestive organs are free from oppression, after a full meal becomes languid, melancholic, and desponding.

The exciting causes of dyspepsia



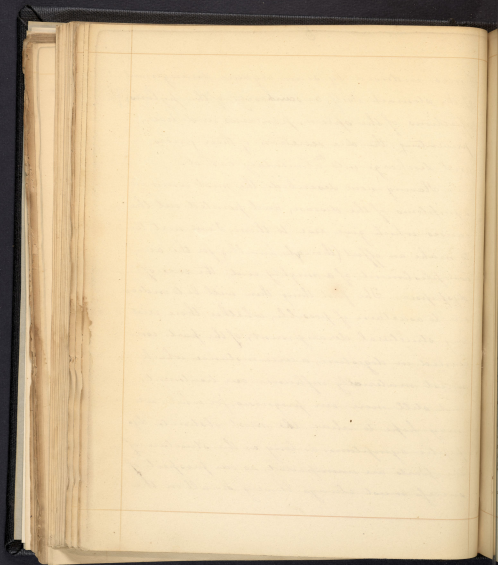
are as various as the aspects which the disease assumes. Every other disease which in any way influences the general health may induce dyspepsia; all violent mental emotions, especially those of a depressive kind; and what is the most frequent cause, and the one which produces the most urgent and distressing symptoms a luxurious diet, or merely too great repletion; and especially the excessive use of ^{or fermented} spiritous liquors. The habitual use of opium or tobacco also acts very unfavourably upon the digestive organs; the want of exercise or the proper regulation of it; and in short whatever may be supposed either to diminish the vital powers, or to produce their irregular action frequently manifests its injurious effects through the medium of the stomach.

The irritability of the stomach and the symptoms consequent to it, are, however some-

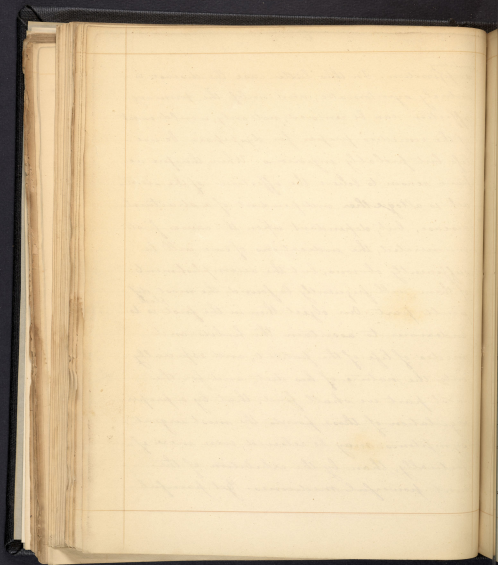


times induced by some organic derangement of the stomach itself, as scirrhosity of the pylorus, affections of the spleen, pancreas, and liver, preventing the due secretion of their juices, and discharge into ^{the} alimentary canal.

Having now described the most common symptoms of the disease, and pointed out the causes which give rise to them, I am next to make an effort (though humbly) for the accomplishment of a mighty end, the cure of dyspepsia. The first thing then will be, to endeavor to ascertain if possible, whether there exist any structural derangement, of the parts concerned in digestion, a circumstance which must materially influence our treatment, and still more our prognosis; for while we may hope to relieve the most obstinate dyspeptic symptoms, as long as the structure of the parts are unimpaired, so our prospect of success must always be very small on the

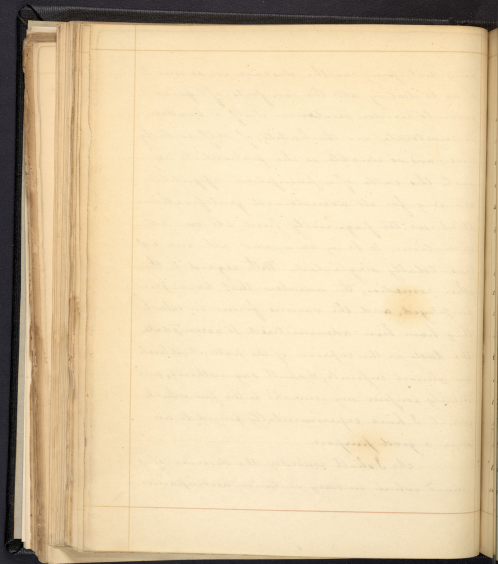


contrary
 supposition. In this latter case the disease is
 entirely symptomatic, and unless the primary
 affection can be removed, not only, would most
 of the remedies proper for dyspepsia be use-
 less, but probably injurious. When therefore we
 have reason to believe the affection of the stom-
 ach is altogether independent of a structural
 disease, but, dependant upon the causes first
 enumerated, the indications of cure will be
 sufficiently obvious; but the accomplishment
 of them, will frequently be found the most dif-
 ficult part. Our object then in the first ^{place} is to
 endeavour to ascertain the habits and
 modes of life of the patient, and especially
 into the nature of his diet; and for the
 most part we shall find, that by a proper
 regulation of those points, the most urgent
 symptoms may be relieved, even more ef-
 fectually, than by the exhibition of the
 most powerful medicines. Yet painful



and distressing as the disease is, so much
so as to destroy all the comforts of life and
even to render existence itself a burden,
so inveterate are the habits of self-indul-
gence, and so unable is the patient to re-
sist the calls of a pampered appetite
craving for its accustomed gratifications
that we too frequently find all our ad-
monitions to be in vain, and all our ad-
vice totally neglected. With regard to the
other remedies, the numbers that have been
employed, and the various forms in which
they have been administered to accommo-
date the taste or the caprice of the patient which
are almost infinite, I shall say nothing, and
merely confine my remarks to the few which
I have experimentally found to an-
swer a good purpose.

As I shall consider the disorder of
mind which in every instance accompanies

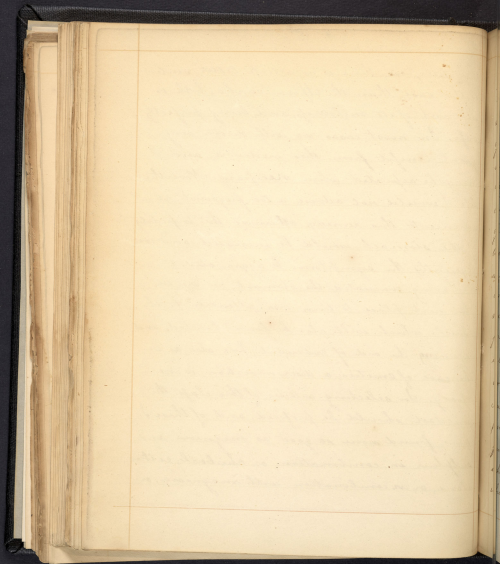


this disease where it is of long standing, or, as is sometimes the case depending upon it as its cause, it will be necessary to arrange the remedies under two heads: first, of those which act upon the body, but more particularly upon the stomach and alimentary canal: and, secondly, of those which will have a tendency to divert and relieve the mind.

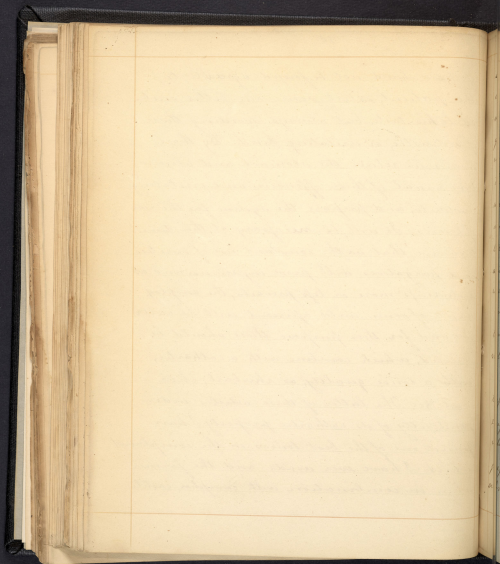
Being called to a patient tormented with the symptoms which I have above enumerated, it will be obvious that cruditie is lodged in the stomach, and, in order to obtain relief, the first step will be to expel it; and for this purpose I would recommend vomiting; therefore the use of this remedy, usually and properly begins the cure of this disease. As vomiting may be excited by various means, it will be necessary to observe, that the mildest articles possessing that quality should be selected. And for

this purpose, there is no article better suited to the case than the *Spicacuanha*, both on account of its mildness, and being perfectly safe. In most cases we will derive very great benefit from this medicine, and it may be repeated when necessary. Nevertheless I would not advise a too frequent recurrence to this remedy, otherwise the torpidity of the stomach would be increased, and consequently the symptoms be aggravated.

Having evacuated the stomach, we are in the next place to turn our attention to the bowels, which will also be found loaded, and requiring the aid of evacuants; here, also, as in the case of emetics, a discrimination is necessary. In selecting articles of this class the mildest should be preferred, and of these I have found none so good as *magnesia* and *sulphur* in combination, or *rhubarb*, either alone, or in combination with *magnesia*; or

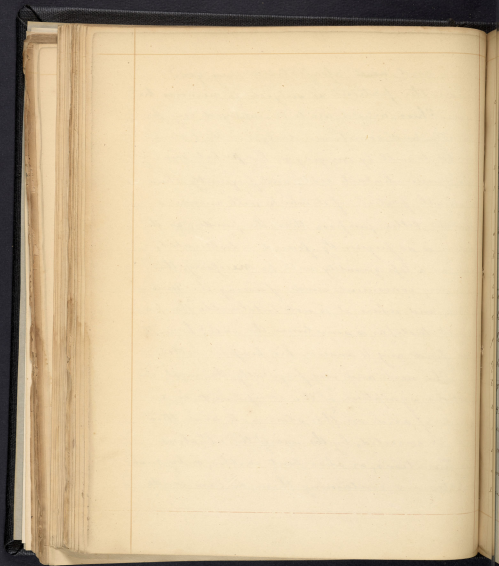


if these should not be found agreeable to the patient, select some one better suited to his taste, but always avoiding those of a drastic, or irritating kind. By those means we relieve the stomach and alimentary canal of their offensive and irritating contents; and prepare the system for the use of tonics. It will be necessary at this time to observe, that, as the constant use of emetics and purgatives will prove injurious, and as costiveness more or less prevails, the employment of some mild aperient will be called for; and for this purpose those should be selected, which combine with a cathartic, with a tonic quality; as rhubarb, chlo-
 coal &c. The latter of these articles independently of its cathartic property I have found one of the best tonics in the complaint which I have ever used: and the former when in combination with camphor, castile

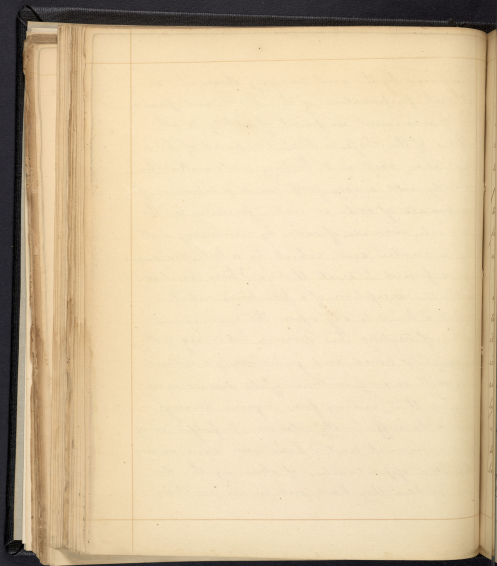


soap, and ~~and~~ asafœtida very good where the patient is subject to nervous tremors. These articles are to be employed very frequently, and sometimes daily; here the patient would do well by carrying in his pocket some of the crude rhubarb root, and frequently chew a small portion of it, which will answer a much better purpose than the powder, as the latter is so frequently found adulterated, and as a less quantity will be necessary; this is a very convenient mode of using the medicine, and where it is not intolerable to the patient's taste (as is sometimes the case) he will not find any to answer his purpose better.

The next and very frequently the most distressing symptom of the complaint is an eruct of acid on the stomach, and this is to be corrected, by the use of the alkaline preparations, or absorbent earths; or, by such substances containing them, as can be de-



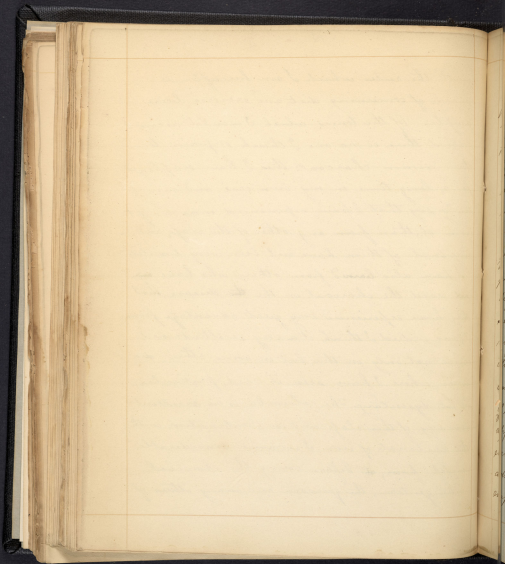
composed by the acid existing there. An excellent preparation of this kind, and probably paramount in point of utility to all others of the class; is that composed of hickory ashes, soot, and boiling water. Another remedy and a very good one, is a solution of carbonate of soda in water, forming in the stomach, muriate of soda. by combining with the muriatic acid, which by a late discovery is found to exist there. I here conclude with the exception of a few tonic articles what I have to say upon the medicinal plan of treating this disease, believing that if properly timed and judiciously employed they will in every instance of the disease excepting in that arising from organic derangement be sufficiently extensive to fulfil every indication—at least I have seen none, in my limited opportunities of observing the disease, where they have not in conjunction



with the rules which I am hereafter to speak of concerning diet and exercise, been ample. Of the tonics which I would recommend there is no one I think superior to the common charcoal: this I have employed for a long time in my own case and can truly say, that I have experienced more benefit from it, than from any other of the class; and my trials of them have not been very limited.

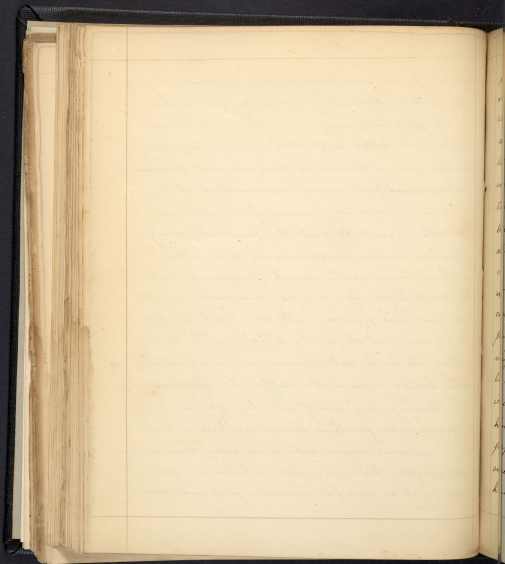
I have also learned from others who have ~~can~~ used the charcoal in the ~~the~~ disease, that they have experienced very great advantage from it; and indeed I think it a very excellent medicine, not only in this, but in some other diseases where I have seen it used, particularly in dysentery. The columba is an excellent remedy of this class and in combination with the carbonate of iron I received considerable benefit from, ~~it~~ before using the charcoal.

The gentian, the quassia and many others of



the clafs are alfo very ufeful, but I fhall pafs from them by merely remarking, that however highly they may be extolled, or by whom prefcribed, little will they avail unlefs aided by the beft of tonics, temperance and ~~exercise~~ exercise, and from an abandonment of the remote or exciting caufes of the difeafe.

With regard to diet the ancient adage of what is one mans meat is anothers poison, may with much propriety be adopted here; for, it is not uncommon to fee that, ^{what} one perfon will eat with impunity, and relifh with delight, will to another be both deleterious and difgusting; and hence occurs the difficulty of selecting of selecting any set of articles particularly appropriate for this difeafe. There is however one conclufion which in every cafe is admiſſible that whatever articles may be employed or in what manner prepared, ſim-

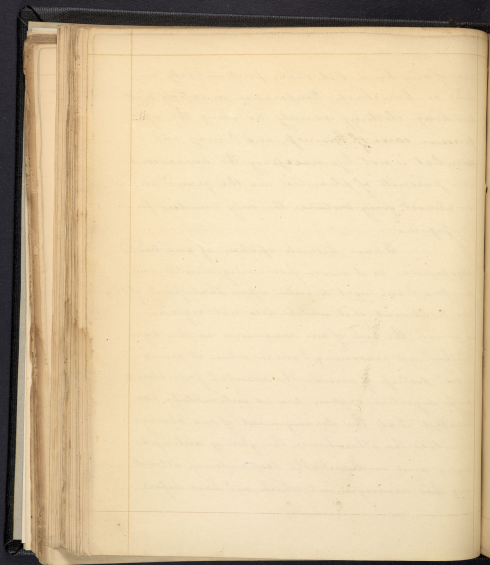


plicity and temperance should never be lost sight of. We will scarce ever come across a case where a milk diet will not be relished; and when that is the case, we shall have little difficulty in obtaining for our patient much relief, if not entirely curing him; for there is no article of the *materna alimentaria* better calculated to fulfil the majority of indications in the complaint, than this. Indeed so efficacious is this article that I have known it in two or three instances to effect perfect cures when aided by those indispensables, pure air and exercise. I might here add the ^{best} list of the other articles recommended to be made use of as diet in dyspepsia, but deem it unnecessary as every one knows best the kind of food that agrees with him, and shall pass from the subject by merely ~~repeating~~ observing, in confirmation of what I have heretofore said, that country air and exer-

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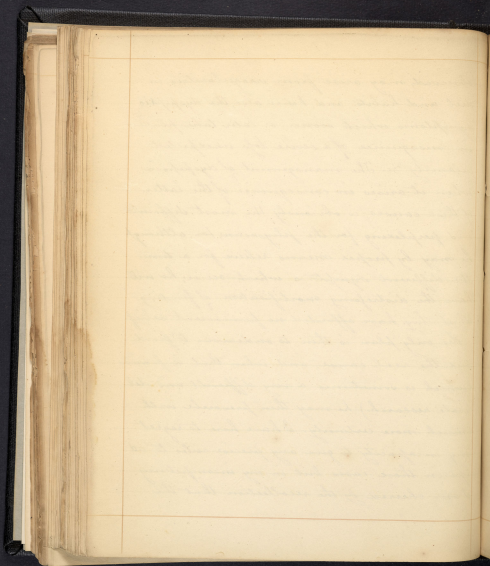
cise of any kind but more particularly riding on horseback, temperance in eating and drinking, clothing warmly, avoiding the oppressive cares of business, and I may add as what is not less necessary the unreasonable pursuits of pleasure, are the grand and in almost every instance the only remedies for dyspepsia.

I have hitherto spoken of and treated dyspepsia as it arises from irregularities and excesses; I am next to enter upon that part of the treatment of it which does not require so much the aid of our medicines as our sympathy and reasoning, I mean when it arises from distress of mind. The mental faculties and digestive organs are so intimately connected that the derangement of one always involves the other—hence the gloomy anticipations and indescribable despondency attending this derangement, which, as I have before



observed, may arise from irregularities in diet and habits; and, hence also, the dyspeptic symptoms which sooner or later take place in consequence of a severe loss, unexpected calamity &c. The management of dyspepsia, when it arises in consequence of the latter of these causes, is obviously the most difficult and perplexing for the physician; for, although he may by proper means relieve for a time the different symptoms which occur, he will have the distressing mortification of finding that they have afforded no permanent relief.

The only plan is then to endeavour to find out the real cause, and when that is found (which is sometimes a very difficult and delicate research) he may then prescribe with much more certainty. I have here to regret my incapacity to give any precise rules to adopt in those cases but in my incompetency I am cheered by the recollection that the



work on the diseases of the mind by that star of his profession the lamented Rush still exists as a monument of his worth and as a directory to us in these interesting and important points.

When I selected this disease for the subject of my thesis, (which was not till after the present course had commenced,) I was not aware of the extensive field I was about to enter upon, were I to treat of it in all its stages and relations to other diseases: therefore when I saw its extent, and knew that I had neither time nor abilities to do it the justice its importance deserves, I concluded to treat merely of that simple form of it, which I had opportunities of observing in my own person, and that of some of my friends, and this I hope will be a sufficient apology for its imperfections, desiring, that, as it is my first essay on any subject, it may be the least worthy the notice of any one.

X X

Dr. J. H. H. H.

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